

JAYWALKING

It doesn't seem like much of a crime or even that dangerous to many of us-- jaywalking. Often people feel safe doing it because they look both ways and think they're a good judge of distance. Still, more than half of pedestrian fatalities are due to jaywalking. (Between 1990 and 2006 there were 14,902 jaywalking fatalities.)

A jaywalker is a pedestrian who crosses the street without regard for traffic regulations, when the light is red or outside of crosswalks. Jaywalkers hit by cars are not usually seen as victims, but as lawbreakers. In New York City, when a driver hit an eighty-year-old woman who emerged from between parked cars near Central Park, he was arrested for driving without a license, not for the woman's death.

One famous jaywalking fatality involved Jerry Rubin who was a social activist during the Vietnam War years. He left the political arena to become a successful entrepreneur. He made money in health foods and then the stock market. But he still had trouble following some rules, like waiting for the light to turn green. At age fifty-six, in 1994, he was killed by a car while jaywalking.

The time saved (which is usual only a moment or two) verses the risk of being hit on a busy city street makes jaywalking a foolish act. But like so many other hazardous shortcuts when someone gets away with it a bunch of times without harm he or she forgets about the risk. But it's still there.

Death

On [November 14, 1994](#), Rubin [jaywalked](#) on [Wilshire Boulevard](#), near [UCLA](#) in [Los Angeles, California](#), while on his way to dinner with his fiancée. It was a weekday evening and, as usual, traffic was heavy, with three lanes in each direction. A car swerved to miss Rubin, and a second car (immediately behind the first) was unable to avoid him. He was taken to the [UCLA Medical Center](#), where he died 14 days later, never having regained consciousness. He is interred in the [Hillside Memorial Park Cemetery](#) in [Culver City, California](#).